

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): A method for operating an aircraft, comprising the steps of:

receiving guidance instructions and guidance parameters at a navigation computer;
transmitting automatic pilot instructions from said navigation computer to a flight control computer;

receiving control instructions and said automatic pilot instructions at said flight control computer; and

in an automatic pilot mode, generating a first plurality of operating commands based on said automatic pilot instructions at said flight control computer;

in a manual pilot mode, generating a second plurality of operating commands based on said control instructions at said flight control computer; and

validating a single control function upon which said first and second pluralities of operating commands are based.

Claim 2 (Canceled).

Claim 3 (Original): The method of Claim 1, further comprising the step of receiving control parameters at said flight control computer.

Claims 4-5 (Canceled).

Claim 6 (Currently Amended): The method of Claim [[4]] 1, wherein said single control function is embedded in said flight control computer.

Claim 7 (Original): The method of Claim 1, further comprising the step of generating said automatic pilot instructions at said navigation computer based on said guidance instructions and on said guidance parameters.

Claim 8 (Original): The method of Claim 7, wherein said automatic pilot instructions correspond in nature to said control instructions.

Claim 9 (Original): The method of Claim 8, wherein said automatic pilot instructions and said control instructions correspond to a commanded vertical load factor.

Claim 10 (Original): The method of Claim 8, wherein said automatic pilot instructions and said control instructions correspond to a commanded roll rate.

Claim 11 (Original): The method of Claim 8, wherein said automatic pilot instructions and said control instructions correspond to a commanded yaw.

Claim 12 (Original): The method of Claim 1, wherein the step of transmitting said automatic pilot instructions from said navigation computer to said flight control computer is performed so that said flight control computer receives said automatic pilot instructions directly from said navigation computer without an intermediate step.

Claim 13 (Currently Amended): A method for operating an aircraft, comprising the steps of:

transmitting automatic pilot instructions from a navigation computer directly to a flight control computer;

receiving control instructions and said automatic pilot instructions at said flight control computer;

in an automatic pilot mode, generating a first plurality of operating commands based on said automatic pilot instructions at said flight control computer; ~~and~~

in a manual pilot mode, generating a second plurality of operating commands based on said control instructions at said flight control computer; and

validating a single control function upon which said first and second pluralities of operating commands are based.

Claims 14-15 (Canceled).

Claim 16 (Currently Amended): The method of Claim [[14]] 13, wherein said single control function is embedded in said flight control computer.

Claims 17-25 (Cancelled).

Claim 26 (Previously Presented): The method of Claim 3, wherein the step of receiving control parameters at said flight control computer comprises receiving said control parameters via an input different from both an input through which said control instructions are received and an input through which said automatic pilot instructions are received.

Claim 27 (Currently Amended): The method of Claim [[5]] 1, wherein the step of validating is performed by said flight control computer.

Claim 28 (Previously Presented): The method of Claim 1, further comprising the step of transmitting said first plurality of operating commands from said flight control computer to a plurality of control surfaces.

Claim 29 (Previously Presented): The method of Claim 28, further comprising the step of receiving inertial information at said navigation computer.

Claim 30 (Previously Presented): The method of Claim 29, wherein a delay between a time at which said inertial information is received at said navigation computer and a time at which said first plurality of operating commands is transmitted from said flight control computer to said plurality of control surfaces is minimized.